



PA Project Firstline Newsletter

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Healthcare and Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced additional elements of fatigue, strain, stress, loss, and grief for healthcare workers. Many healthcare workers experienced increased workloads in the face of short staffing and shortages in critical personal protective equipment. These strains contributed to increasing anxiety and the risk of personal harm among healthcare workers. Check out resources to reduce stress at work:

- Mental Health in the Workplace
- How Right Now | Finding What Helps
- Coping During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- How to Cope with Job Stress and Build Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Emergency Responders: Tips for Taking Care of Yourself
- Suicide Prevention
- National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience

Recognize Infection Risks in Healthcare

Learning to recognize infection risks in healthcare means learning to identify moments throughout your workday when there are opportunities for germs to spread and make people sick. To recognize these opportunities, we need to understand **the things that contribute to germ spread.**



Germs naturally live in a variety of places, known as a **reservoir**. Reservoirs include the skin, gut, respiratory tract, blood, wet/dry surfaces, dirt/dust, and devices. Examples of various germs in reservoirs are illustrated in the picture.

Germs leave the reservoir through **various pathways**, such as touching, splashes and sprays via bodily fluids or water, procedures, surgeries, and inhaling respiratory droplets. For example, if a patient's skin is broken because they have an IV inserted, germs can enter their body through that break in the skin and cause an infection.

Request a Training

Did you know that PA Project Firstline provides in-person or virtual training for healthcare facilities and all types of frontline healthcare workers?

To request training for your facility, we have a web form you can fill out to let us know what types of training and topics you are interested in for your staff. Check out our training request form [here](#).

Request an Escape Room Training

The escape room is a live, interactive training where teams of 5-6 people will work together for 30 minutes to navigate Clutterbug's clever traps and help unite with Captain Germ-B-Gone to proclaim victory. Four stations cover hand hygiene, source control, cleaning and disinfection, and personal protective equipment (PPE) and reinforce specific infection prevention and control objectives throughout. Does your facility have what it takes to get out and stay out of the escape room? If you're interested in bringing this training to your facility, contact the PA Project Firstline team at RA-DHFIRSTLINE@pa.gov.

Contact Us

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However, there is more to the spread of infections than reservoirs and pathways! Germs also need a **person** to infect. It is important to remember the susceptible host can be a patient, visitor, you or one of your coworkers.

The good news is infection isn't inevitable. The entire process must occur to result in an illness. As a result, it is important to **recognize risks to prevent infection**.



Infection prevention and control actions can help keep germs from spreading and causing disease.

Risk recognition is seeing the potential for a problem to happen

Because no two days in healthcare are ever the same, there will be moments when healthcare workers might need to apply infection control recommendations to situations that aren't usually described in guidelines.

That's why understanding how germs spread and make people sick is so helpful – **it allows you to recognize infection risks throughout your workday, no matter the moment!**